



Congressional Record

Mr. Bishop (GA). Madame Speaker, I am pleased to co-sponsor this amendment to the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act to restore public access and transparency to the names of students and instructors at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, or WHINSEC.

WHINSEC is located in Georgia's 2nd Congressional District at Ft. Benning. I have on many occasions visited the school and have supported the school's efforts to share its civil and military training with our friends and partners in Latin America. WHINSEC is a military and academic institution, the primary effort of which is to promote peace, democratic values, and respect for human rights through inter-American cooperation. I agree with my esteemed colleague, Mr. McGovern, that the school should provide the names of Latin American and U.S. military personnel who attend or teach at the school, as well as the curriculum taught at the school.

One of the responsibilities of any nation embracing a democratic form of government is to ensure that the institutes which serve and educate its leaders are open to freedom of discourse, which includes constructive criticism.

This amendment brings back the former policy of disclosing attendees, faculty members and course offerings. Allowing this information to become public will protect the school from attempts to discredit its efforts to develop partnerships and the principles of democracy. It will also demonstrate to the nations of Latin America that the lessons learned at WHINSEC are ethical, promote human rights, and provide a civil/military framework of building democratic governments.

Please join me in supporting this effort to ensure that the institutions we entrust to promote democratic principles are open for review and discussion. I urge you to support the amendment to H.R. 2647, the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act.